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Industrial Disputes, Australia

The number of disputes (strikes or lockouts), employees involved and working days lost; cause of dispute; duration; and the reason work resumed

Reference period December 2022

Released 9/03/2023

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Key statistics

In the December quarter 2022:

- 69 disputes occurred.
- 22,200 employees were involved and 21,300 working days lost.
- disputes occurred in 8 industries and in 8 states and territories.

During the year ended December 2022, there were 189 disputes and a total of 197,000 working days lost.

	Quarter		Year ended	
	September Quarter 2022	December Quarter 2022	December Quarter 2021	December Quarter 2022
Number of disputes (no.)				
New	60	54	128	181
Total	70	69	130	189
Employees involved ('000)				
New	21.2	19.0	70.7	121.6
Total	22.2	22.2	71.1	122.9
Working days lost ('000)	28.1	21.3	116.6	197.0

Revision to working days lost per thousand employees series

The quarterly Labour Force estimates underwent major rebenchmarking for the November quarter 2022 release. This was due to applying rebased Estimated Residential Population benchmarks based on 2021 Census data. As a result, the Industrial Disputes working days lost per thousand employees time series has been revised from September quarter 2017 onwards. These updates are reflected in this release and the associated time series spreadsheets.

Guide to labour statistics

To learn more about our different labour measures, their purpose and how to use them, see our [Guide to labour statistics \(https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/understanding-statistics/guide-labour-statistics\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/understanding-statistics/guide-labour-statistics). It provides summary information on labour market topics including [Industry employment \(https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/understanding-statistics/guide-labour-statistics/industry-employment-guide\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/understanding-statistics/guide-labour-statistics/industry-employment-guide) and [Earnings \(https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/understanding-statistics/guide-labour-statistics/earnings-guide\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/understanding-statistics/guide-labour-statistics/earnings-guide) data.

Overview

In the December quarter 2022, there were:

- 69 disputes, 1 less than the previous quarter.
- 22,200 employees involved, which is the same as the previous quarter.
- 21,300 working days lost, a decrease from 28,100 in the previous quarter.

Year ended estimates:

- 189 disputes occurred, 59 more than in the previous year.
- 197,000 working days were lost, 80,400 more than in the previous year.

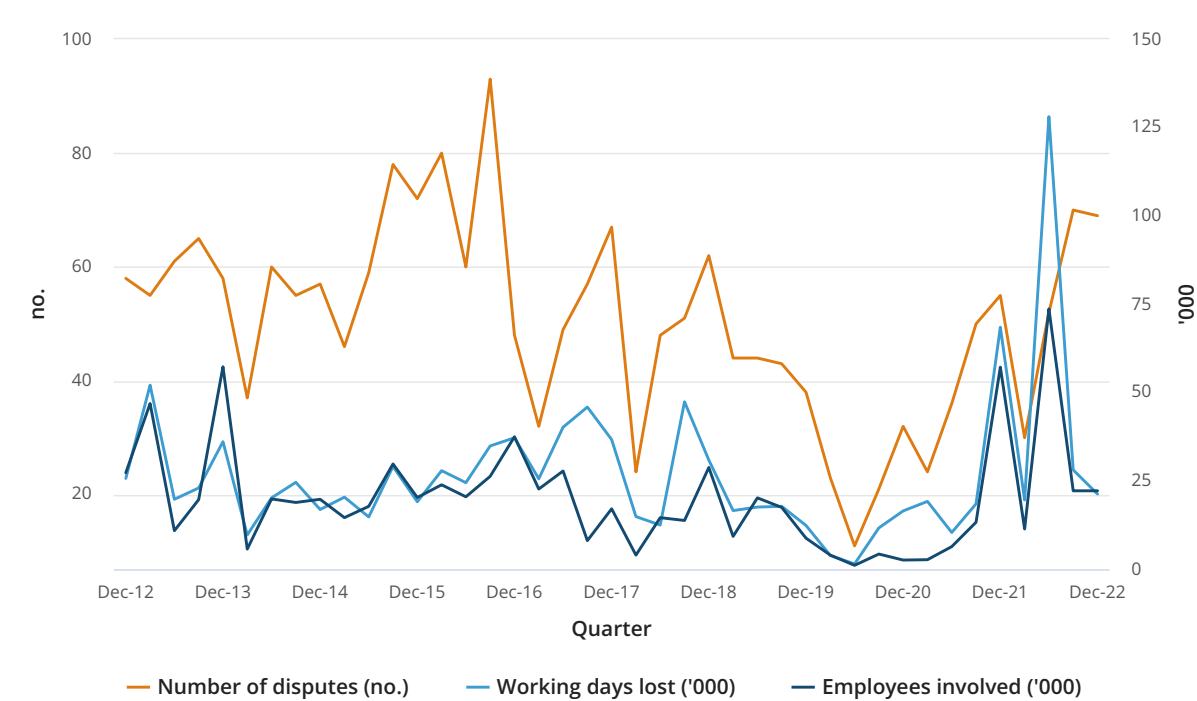
Industrial disputes which occurred during the quarter

	Number of disputes		Employees involved		Working days lost
	New (no.)	Total (no.)	New ('000)	Total ('000)	('000)
December Quarter 2020	27	32	2.2	2.6	16.5
March Quarter 2021	22	24	2.3	2.7	19.2
June Quarter 2021	30	36	6.0	6.4	10.4
September Quarter 2021	39	50	11.7	13.3	18.5
December Quarter 2021	37	55	50.6	57.2	68.5
March Quarter 2022	22	30	10.1	11.4	19.6
June Quarter 2022	45	52	71.2	73.7	128.1
September Quarter 2022	60	70	21.2	22.2	28.1
December Quarter 2022	54	69	19.0	22.2	21.3

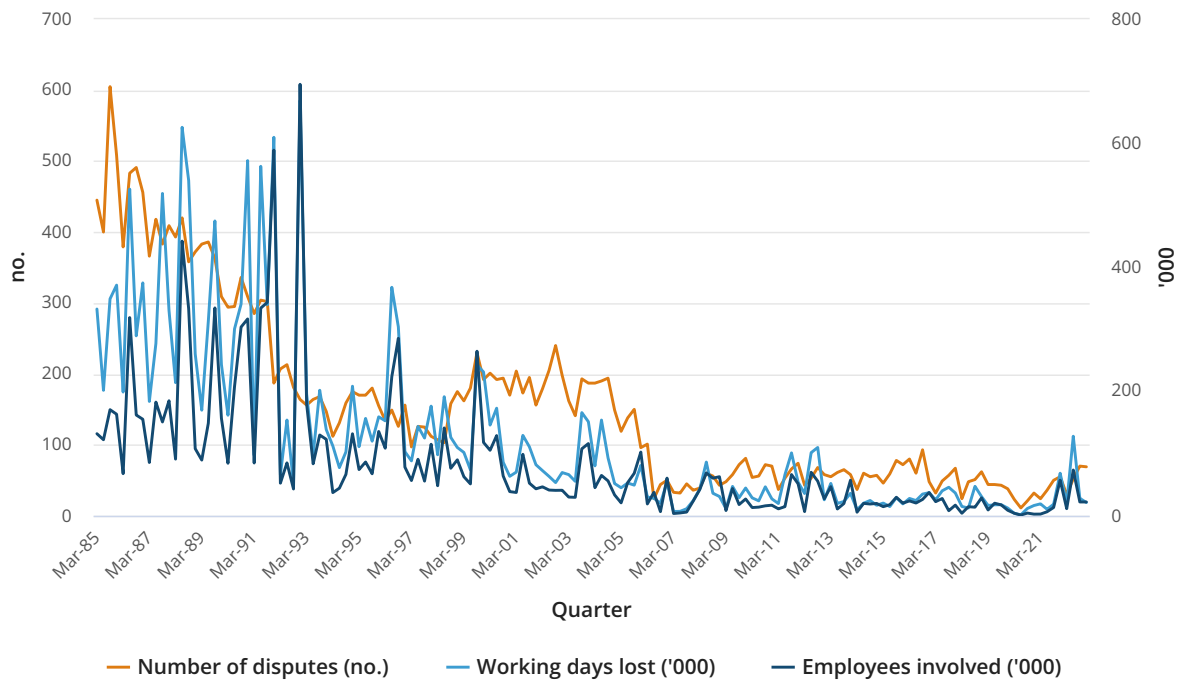
Long-term trends

The level of industrial disputation over recent years is considerably lower than in the 1980's and prior decades.

Industrial disputes in the last 10 years, Australia



Industrial disputes historical series, Australia



Industry

In the December quarter, disputes occurred in eight industries. Over a third (40.5%) of the total working days lost were in the Education and training; Health care and social assistance industry.

Industrial disputes which occurred during the quarter, industry

	September Quarter 2022		December Quarter 2022	
	Working days lost	Working days lost per thousand employees	Working days lost	Working days lost per thousand employees
	('000)	(*)(no.)	('000)	(no.)
Mining				
Coal mining	np	np	0.1	1.3
Other mining	np	np	np	np
Manufacturing				
Metal product etc (a)	1.8	6.0	np	np
Other manufacturing	1.0	1.9	6.2	12.1
Construction	3.1	3.0	2.5	2.3
Transport, postal & warehousing	1.9	3.1	0.9	1.4
Education & training; Health care & social assistance	7.6	2.5	8.6	2.8
Other industries (a)	4.1	0.6	2.2	0.3
All industries	28.1	2.3	21.3	1.7

- nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

np not available for publication but included in totals where applicable, unless otherwise indicated

(a) see Glossary - [Industry \(/methodologies/industrial-disputes-australia-methodology/dec-2022#glossary\)](#) - for details of industries included

(*) Working days lost per thousand employees series has been revised

States and territories

Disputes occurred in eight states and territories in the December quarter, with nearly a third (29.5%) of the total working days lost occurring in New South Wales.

Industrial disputes which occurred during the quarter, states and territories

	September Quarter 2022		December Quarter 2022	
	Working days lost	Working days lost per thousand employees	Working days lost	Working days lost per thousand employees
	('000)	(*)(no.)	('000)	(no.)
New South Wales	14.6	3.8	6.3	1.6
Victoria	2.5	0.8	5.2	1.6
Queensland	2.4	1.0	2.8	1.1
South Australia	2.0	2.4	0.8	1.0
Western Australia	np	np	3.2	2.3
Tasmania	2.3	9.2	2.0	7.5
Northern Territory	1.7	13.5	0.5	3.7
Australian Capital Territory	np	np	0.4	1.8
Australia	28.1	2.3	21.3	1.7

- nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

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Cause of dispute

Most industrial disputes are Enterprise Bargaining (EB) related. Over the past 10 years, disputes over employment conditions have generally been the most prevalent.

EB related issues were the cause of 89% of disputes (49 of 55) which ended in the September quarter 2022.

	June Quarter 2022			September Quarter 2022		
	Number of disputes (no.)	Employees involved ('000)	Working days lost ('000)	Number of disputes (no.)	Employees involved ('000)	Working days lost ('000)
Enterprise Bargaining related						
Remuneration	11	9.3	9.4	17	3.8	10.1
Employment conditions	26	19.7	39.2	31	6.4	15.1
Other	-	-	-	1	np	np
Non-Enterprise Bargaining related						
Remuneration	-	-	-	-	-	-
Employment conditions	-	-	-	1	np	np
Health and safety	1	0.3	0.2	1	np	np
Job security	1	np	np	-	-	-
Managerial policy	2	0.1	0.1	3	48.1	92.0
Union issues	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other	1	np	np	1	np	np
Total	42	29.5	48.9	55	59.2	118.2

Working days lost

Working days lost is a measure of the length of a dispute, relative to the number of employees involved.

Of the 55 disputes which ended in the September quarter, 21 lasted up to and including 1 day. These disputes had:

- 5,800 employees involved; and
- 4,900 working days lost.

Working days lost for disputes which ended during the quarter

	June Quarter 2022			September Quarter 2022		
	Number of disputes (no.)	Employees involved ('000)	Working days lost ('000)	Number of disputes (no.)	Employees involved ('000)	Working days lost ('000)
Up to and including 1 day	27	13.7	13.2	21	5.8	4.9
Over 1 day and up to including 2 days	3	10.0	18.4	13	50.9	95.4
Over 2 and less than 5 days	8	5.3	11.7	10	np	np
5 and less than 10 days	3	0.3	1.6	9	1.1	9.6
10 days and over	1	0.2	3.9	2	np	np
Total	42	29.5	48.9	55	59.2	118.2

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Reason work resumed

The reason work resumed relates to the last day of action taken. Resumption of work can occur without resolution to the issues that triggered the dispute.

There was a pre-determined return to work for 89% of disputes (49 of 55) which ended in the September quarter 2022.

Reason work resumed for disputes which ended during the quarter

	June Quarter 2022			September Quarter 2022		
	Number of disputes (no.)	Employees involved ('000)	Working days lost ('000)	Number of disputes (no.)	Employees involved ('000)	Working days lost ('000)
Negotiation without intervention of a third party	5	0.3	4.1	2	np	np
State legislation	-	-	-	-	-	-
Federal legislation	-	-	-	1	np	np
Pre-determined return to work	37	29.2	44.8	49	58.2	116.5
Resumption without negotiation	-	-	-	2	0.7	0.8
Mediation	-	-	-	1	-	-
Other reasons	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	42	29.5	48.9	55	59.2	118.2

- nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

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Data downloads

Time Series Spreadsheets

⬇ Download all (476.87 KB)

Table 1: Industrial disputes which occurred during the period

⬇ [Download XLSX](#)

[58.15 KB]

Table 2a: Industrial disputes which occurred during the period, working days lost, industry

[↓ Download XLSX](#)

[53.44 KB]

Table 2b: Industrial disputes which occurred during the period, working days lost per thousand employees, industry

[↓ Download XLSX](#)

[53.19 KB]

Table 3a: Industrial disputes which occurred during the period, working days lost, states and territories

[↓ Download XLSX](#)

[62.56 KB]

Table 3b: Industrial disputes which occurred during the period, working days lost per thousand employees, states and territories

[↓ Download XLSX](#)

[61.24 KB]

Table 4a: Industrial disputes which ended during the period, cause of dispute

[↓ Download XLSX](#)

[90.01 KB]

Table 4b: Industrial disputes which ended during the period, working days lost per employee involved

[↓ Download XLSX](#)

[62.69 KB]

Table 4c: Industrial disputes which ended during the period, reason work resumed

[↓ Download XLSX](#)

[77.32 KB]

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This release previously used catalogue number 6321.0.55.001.

Methodology

